

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

OPM-11-5
STAT

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- Seoul Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

September 1988

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

C/Ops

31 Oct 88 [Signature]

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Exec. Reg.



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
SEOUL BUREAU



7 October 1988
FBIS-5617-88

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- Seoul Bureau -- September 1988

I. GENERAL

Despite reports of the presence of terrorists in the Republic, the 24th Olympic games opened in Seoul amid tight security and much fanfare without incident. Soon after the opening, however, the perceived slights of the U.S. media and some members of the U.S. Olympic team brought latent anti-American sentiments among some elements of Korean society to the surface. The press was uniformly critical of examples of U.S. "arrogance" that it perceived. The criticism saw some effect at a few of the Olympic venues, most notably in the hostile crowd reaction to the U.S. team and fans at the boxing venue. Members of the ruling Democratic Justice Party chimed in with their criticism of the U.S. media and Embassy officers worked overtime to handle irate callers. Radical students seized the opportunity to lead some anti-U.S. protests, including a fire bomb attack on a U.S. Army depot near the Embassy housing area. With the obvious success of the games themselves, cooler heads began to prevail, with calls for some perspective on events. By the closing of the games the situation had eased somewhat. The significance of all this, if any, remains to be seen.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. Back issues of the DAILY REPORT were consulted for an indication of how Pyongyang might handle the 40th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK. While reports on the 30th anniversary celebration gave an accurate guide of what events would take place, the actual sequence of events differed. Where it was anticipated Kim Il-song would speak on 9 September, in fact he gave his report at a meeting on 8 September, the eve of the anniversary. Fortunately, KCNA carried the text of Kim Il-song's speech on the same day. Prior coordination enabled quick handling of Pyongyang television coverage of the event, which was shown to the Ambassador and processed for Headquarters.

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2. True to their word, North Korea, Cuba and five other countries failed to show up for the Olympics. In the week before the opening ceremony Pyongyang radio carried the North Korean Olympic Committee's final word on the subject and a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman's statement to the effect that the North did not represent a threat to the games. These were quickly processed and filed at high precedence by the Bureau.

3. In another event timed to coincide with the Olympics, Hungary and the Republic of Korea agreed to exchange permanent missions. Although there had been anticipation that such an event might take place, the timing caught some observers by surprise. North Korea roundly denounced Hungary in a party daily commentary aired by Pyongyang radio shortly after the agreement was made public. Expectations have been raised that there will be more such agreements with Communist bloc nations, with a heretofore unthinkable continuing presence of bloc officials in Seoul.

4. Moscow radio has discontinued its 0930 GMT international service broadcast in Korean for unknown reasons. The Bureau is now monitoring the 0900-0930 GMT Moscow Korean broadcast.

B. Technical

A new antenna, a higher mast, and a rotator were installed at the Joint Duty Office to improve reception of Pyongyang television service. While reception has improved only marginally due to the signal quality itself, JDO personnel are better able to adjust for signal fade now and have done so on several occasions without prompting by the Bureau.

C. Lateral Services

1. At the request of the Embassy political section, London Bureau was asked to drop the Bureau a copy of the text of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's Krasnoyarsk speech. Embassy officers provided copies to local counterparts, among them the Philippine military attache who was said to be quite pleased that the speech was readily available.

2. At AG request the Bureau processed two reports on a State Department seminar on Korea from the ROK vernacular press for a high-level consumer.

3. MOD passed on word of consumer interest in VSLs on Pyongyang television coverage of the opening and closing sessions of the DPRK's national heroes meeting. VSLs had already been planned before receipt of the message.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

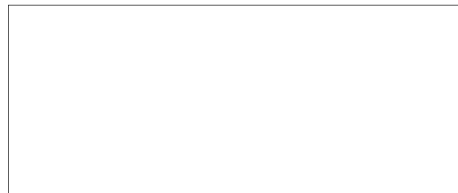
Associate editor [] has resigned to accompany her husband on his next assignment in the Washington, D.C. area. A search for her replacement has already begun, with several promising candidates identified and tested.

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B. Buildings and Grounds

The Bureau reluctantly agreed to persistent requests by Embassy administrative officers for part of the Bureau's storage area for use as an office. The trade was made on condition that a larger storage space be provided. The resultant configuration cedes the front part of the old storage area, the part containing the window, to the Consular section while the Bureau retains the rest of the area in addition to the Consular section's contiguous storage area. Construction of the new walls and rearrangement of the doors began the first weekend in October. Embassy GSO has agreed to provide more power outlets in the newly configured storage area, which will be used as the training area when field bureau automation gets underway.



Acting Chief, Seoul Bureau

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cc: Chief, Okinawa Bureau
Chief, Hong Kong Bureau